

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-11 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 OMB-01 ACDA-12

EB-08 HA-05 OES-07 /148 W

-----060304 210438Z /11

R 191730Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9553

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN NEWYORK

CINCEUR VIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1364

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, AG, MO, MR, SS, EIND

SUBJ: DISCUSSION WITH MAURITANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: (A) STATE 127569(NOTAL), (B) USDAO PARIS 171132Z MAY 78  
(NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: IN WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR  
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MAY 18, FONMIN MOUKNASS MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) NOTED LIBYAN AND MALIAN SAHARA MEDIATION EFFORTS AND SAID  
OULD DADDAH WOULD TALK WITH BOUMEDIENE PROVIDED MOROCCAN/  
MAURITANIAN ALLIANCE AND SAHARA SOVEREIGNTY NOT DISCUSSED.

(B) FRENCH INTERVENTION IN SAHARA WAR HAD SAVED MAURITANIA

FROM DIFFICULT SITUATION;

(C) LIBYANS MAY NO LONGER BE ARMING POLISARIO;

(D) US AIRCRAFT SALE TO SAUDI ARABIA OPENED NEW ERA;

(E) WILL US RECOGNIZE SOVIET/CUBAN THREAT IN AFRICA FOLLOWING SHABA INVASION?

(F) PUCARA AIRCRAFT PURCHASE OFF BUT GIRM LOOKING ELSEWHERE;

(G) SAUDI CONFIDENCE IN MAURITANIA RESTORED FOLLOWING OULD DADDAH'S MIDEAST TRIP;

(H) GIRM SEEKING REASONABLE PROPOSALS FOR SOLUTION OIL AND SUGAR REFINERY PROBLEMS;

(I) SAHARA PRISONER EXCHANGE NOT IN OFFING;

(J) SOVIET/MOROCCAN FISHERIES AGREEMENT IMPLIES SOVIET RECOGNITION OF MOROCCAN SOVEREIGNTY IN SAHARA WATERS;

(K) GIRM HOPES FOR US CONGRESSIONAL VISIT TO MAURITANIA.

END SUMMARY.

2. MEDIATION EFFORTS - DURING A RELAXED AFTER DINNER CONVERSATION AT THE RESIDENCE LAST NIGHT, FONMIN MOUKNASS CONFIEED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT BOTH THE LIBYANS AND THE MALIANS ARE ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE A TETE-A-TETE BETWEEN OULD DADDAH AND BOUMEDIENE. HOWEVER, NEITHER TRIPOLI NOR BAMAKO HAS YET COME UP WITH AN ACCEPTABLE FORMULA AND NO DAE OR PLACE HAVE BEEN SELECTED. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT OULD DADDAH IS READY TO TALK TO BOUMEDINE ON ANY SUBJECT WITH TWO INALTERABLE EXCEPTIONS: (A) HE WILL NOT CONSIDER ANY PROPOSAL TO DISASSOCIATE THE GIRM FROM MOROCCO I.E. THERE CAN BE NO REPEAT NO SEPARATE PEACE TALKS AND (B) THE QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER WESTERN SAHARA IS NOT NEGOTIABLE. EVERYTHING ELSE IS FAIR GAME INCLUDING A FORMULA THAT WOULD PROVIDE ALGERIA WITH ACCESS TO THE SEA.

3. FRENCH INTERVENTION-MOUKNASS VOLUNTEERED THAT UNTIL THE FRENCH DECIDED TO INTERVENE LAST DECEMBER, MAURITANIA WAS HANGING ON THE ROPES. THE ONLY PEOPLE THEY COULD COUNT ON WERE THE SAUDIS AND THE MOROCCANS.

4. LIBYA - MAURITANIA ALMOST SEVERED RELATIONS WITH LIBYA LATE IN 1977, MOUKNASS SAID, WHEN IT LEARNED THAT POLISARIO WAS PERMITTED TO RECRUIT IN LIBYA. HE IMPLIED THAT AS A RESULT OF OULD DADDAH'S RECENT TALKS WITH QADHAFI, THE LIBYANS HAVE AGREED TO STOP PROVIDING MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO THE POLISARIO.

5. US AIRCRAFT SALE TO SAUDI ARABIA - HE SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT THE SALE HERALDED THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA IN THE USG'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY.

6. SHABA INVASION - I DREW UPON THE TALKINGPOINTS PROVIDED IN REFTEL A. MOUKNASS OPINED THAT, BASED ON HIS INTERPRETATION OF NEWS BROADCASTS, HE DETECTED MORE USG INTEREST IN AFRICA THAN HAD BEEN THE CASE SINCE THE ANGOLA AFFAIR. HE ASKED THE RHETORICAL QUESTION: IS THE USG FINALLY BEGINNING TO RECOGNIZE THE SOVIET/CUBAN THREAT IN AFRICA?

7. PARIS FRANCOPHONE SUMMIT - HE STATED THAT PRESIDENT MOUSA TRAORE OF MALI WOULD TRAVEL WITH OULD DADDAH MAY 19TH IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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AIRCRAFT TO PARIS BY WAY OF A BRIEF STOP IN CASABLANCA AND THAT HE (MOUKNASS) WOULD ACCOMPANY. THE PRESUMPTION IS THAT THE TWO PRESIDENTS WOULD SEIZE THE OCCASION TO DISCUSS A POSSIBLE FORMULA FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE WESTERN SAHARA CONFLICT.

8. PURCHASE OF PUCARA AIRCRAFT-HE CONFIRMED WHAT HAD BEEN REPORTED IN USDAO PARIS REPORT OF MAY 17 (REFTEL B) THAT THE PURCHASE OF THE ARGENTINE PUCARA AIRCRAFT HAD BEEN POSTPONED BECAUSE THE FUNDS HAD TO BE DIVERTED FOR OTHER PURPOSES. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE GIRM STILL WISHES TO HAVE ITS OWN AVIATION CAPABILITY, THAT IS IT DOES NOT WANT TO TEP TO RELY ON MOROCCO AND FRANCE. HOWEVER, HE SAID THE GIRM IS NOT WEDDED TO THE PUCARA, IN FACT, DURING PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH'S VISIT TO JORDAN LAST WEEK THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING AIRCRAFT FROM JORDA WAS DISCUSSED. HE DID NOT ELABORATE.

9. OULD DADDAH'S VISIT TO THE NEAR EAST -MOUKNASS DESCRIBED THE VISIT AS VERY SUCCESSFUL. HE SAID, THE SAUDIS HAVE RE-NEWED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THE GIRM. THEY SEEMED CONVINCED THAT THEY MUST SUPPORT THOSE BRETHREN WHO ARE GUIDED BY THE TENETS OF ISLAM AND HBHUS NOT LIKELY TO FALL VICTIM TO PROGRESSIVE IDEOLOGY AND PRESSURE.

10. SUGAR REFINERY DISPUTE - HE URGED ME TO TRY TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE. HE SAID ALTHOUGH THE BALL IS IN LANG-PRITCHARD'S COURT, THE GIRM, WITH TWO WHITE ELEPHANTS ON ITS HANDS (THE OIL REFINERY AND SUGAR REFINERY) IS WILLING TO CONSIDER ANY REASONABLE PROPOSAL THAT WOULD START THE PRODUCTION AND SALE OF SUGAR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

11. THE ICRC VISITOR ON SAHARA PRISIONERS -HE SAID  
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THAT OULD DADDAH GAVE THE ICRC OFFICIAL, MR. KLOTER, CARTE BLANCHE TO VISIT ANY PART OF MAURITANIA AND TO TALK TO ANY PRISONERS. KLOTER VISITED DAKHLA AND NOUADHIBOU, AS WELL AS NOUAKCHOTT. MOUKNASS WAS NOT AWARE OF THE VISIT TO ALGERIA. THERE IS NO THOUGHT OF PRISONER EXCHANGE. THE ALGERIANS HAVE SHOWN NO FLEXIBILITY IN THEIR INSISTENCE THAT MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS DISCUSS PRISONER QUESTIONS WITH THE POLISARIO RATHER THAN THE GOA.

12. SOVIET/MOROCCAN FISHERIES AGREEMENT - WHEN I ASKED IF HE INTERPRETED THE RECENT SOVIET/MOROCCAN FISHERIES AGREEMENT AS IMPLICIT RECOGNITION BY THE USSR OF MOROCCO'S CLAIM TO THE WESTERN SAHARA, HE ANSWERED QUOTE OF COURSE UNQUOTE. WHEN I ASKED IF HE THOUGHT THAT THE SOVIETS GOT THMSELVES INTO THIS POSITION DELIBERATELY OR INADVERTANTLY, HE SMILED AND STATED QUOTE THE RUSSIANS ARE BIG BOYS WHO KNOW HOW TO READ END QUOTE.

13. HIGH LEVEL USG VISITS TO MAURITANIA - HE STATED THAT THE GIRM IS PREPARING A FORMAL INVITATION TO CONGRESSMAN DERWINSKI (WHO MET THE VICE PRESIDENT OF MAURITANIA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INHUISBON AT THE INTER INTERPARLIAMENTARIAN UNION CONFERENCE) TO VISIT MAURITANIA THIS YEAR WITH THREE OR SO OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, SENATORS AS JLL QS REPRESENTATIVES. HE ALSO HOPED THAT EITHER UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM OR ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE OR BOTH WOQLF VISIT MAURITANIA IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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## Message Attributes

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